

TESTIMONY ON HB 5037

Honorable members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Kevin McCarthy. I live in New Haven and I am testifying on the housing aspects of the governor's proposed budget.

Some of the longer serving members may know that I was on the staff of the Office of Legislative Research for 30 years before retiring after the 2014 session. Having spent half of my adult life in hearings at the LOB, I greatly appreciate your conscientious.

Addressing housing affordability and homelessness involves more than providing more funding in these areas. Zoning law also needs to change. But this is Appropriations, not P&D. And money is an essential ingredient

Housing affordability and homelessness are often viewed as simply big city issues. They aren't. Statewide, over 30% of homeowners and more than 50% of renters are cost-burdened, spending more than 30%. And most of the homeless individuals I've met in New Haven are not natives of the city (since retiring, I have volunteered at a breakfast program that primarily serves homeless individuals).

Ironically, many of the staff at the non-profit agencies who work in this area have a hard time paying the rent. This morning, I spoke with the executive director of New Haven's Columbus House. She noted that she can only afford to pay her entry level staff \$16 per hour. That income only permits a person to pay \$832 per month in rent using the 30% of income benchmark. There really aren't apartments charging this rent in New Haven or most other municipalities. This level of pay contributes to high turnover at the agencies, and reduces their effectiveness.

There are several areas where funding in the governor's budget should be expanded. In addition to providing greater support for frontline agencies, funding for the Coordinated Access Networks and RAP should be increased.

Thank you for your consideration.

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